

# Updating *Bahu Asot* Maharashtra Geet

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## Abstract

This essay argues why we need to update the song *Bahu Asot Sundar Sampanna Hee Mahaan*. In 2009 Maharashtra can correctly claim to be great, beautiful, rich and blessed.

## 1 Introduction

Maharashtra Geet is usually sung on Maharashtra Din (May 1) and we do not think of its meaning. Unfortunately the first line *Bahu Asot Sundar Sampanna Hee Mahaan* alleges that Maharashtra is not so sundar nor is it Sampanna and goes on to say that despite the shortcomings we love our Maharashtra!

This poem might have been appropriate during the British Raj when it was written, but exhibits an unnecessary inferiority complex. It belongs to the time when Maharashtra did not do so well compared to Northerners or Bengalis. The British rulers did not like Maharashtrians, perhaps due to our independent streak, but they do not matter any more!

I think the poem can be updated if we put our poetic talent to work. Here are some reasons why Maharashtra has no more serious shortcomings, any more than those of any collection of human beings.

## 2 Greatness

Actually the name Maharashtra signifies confident claim to be Mahaa or great. We were confident people during the days of Saint Dnyaaneshwar who wrote “Amrutaate hi paijaa jinke,” which means that we can beat the heavenly elixir (in greatness or sweetness) in open competition. Dnyaaneshwar had a competitive spirit, of winning (Paijaa jinke). Hence a revised Maharastra Geet should reclaim the 13-th century “greatness.”

Pune is one of the few places in India which was not ruled by Muslim rulers thanks to Shivaji. Tilak and Agarkar showed that Maraathis can claim to be truly free thinkers.

Marathi women are great in many practical respects in day to day life. They are perhaps the most progressive in India. When I came to America, I was struck by the western notion that “somehow women are inferior.” My upbringing in Pune was such that notion of inferiority of women was totally strange and wrong to me. America is becoming closer to Pune only more recently.

Greatness in Art literature and science:

Music: Indian classical music is best in Maharashtra.

Dance: Bollywood shows the greatness of Marathi dance

Drama: We have most original plays. Sardaa Act banning child marriage was inspired by a Marathi musical drama “Sharadaa” by Mr Deval.

Drawing (Chitra kalaa) Mumbai has the best artists.

Architecture: Just look at Hanging Gardens and new skyscrapers in Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Nasik etc.

## 3 Beauty (Sundar)

Maharashtra has numerous beautiful spots. Kokan beaches, waterfalls, Duke’s Nose, Raya-Gad, Sinha-Gad, Prataap-Gad all have amazing natural beauty plus historical significance. Man-made beautiful spots are all over Maharashtra. Mumbai lights on August 15, January 26 or Christmas are remarkably beautiful compared to anywhere else in India.

## 4 Wealth (Sampanna)

As an economist, I can assure you that Maharashtra is number one on almost every economic indicator.

There was a time at the time of independence of India in 1947 when Maharashtra was somewhat backward. In 1947 Bengal was number 1 economically. Look at Bengal now! They drove out the entrepreneurs due to their short-sighted “Bangaal for Bengalis only” policy. Entrepreneurs (Marwadis) left Bengal for Maharashtra. Now Bengalis are driving out the Parsees (Tataas) by denying locating of the Nano Car plant in North Bengal. Maharashtra allows entrepreneurs to become rich, while bringing jobs to Maharashtra.

For almost a decade now Maharashtra (with Mumbai of course) is number one economically. The unemployed from all over India are flocking to Maharashtra. We pay highest taxes to the Union Government of India.

## 5 Blessed

Some states (Kerala) claim being blessed by God. Bhagwat Geeta says that success is 20% luck (blessings) (Daiwam Chaiwaatra Panchamam). Maharashtra’s phenomenal economic success can be partly credited to our being blessed (proof is in the pudding!)

We should not forget that Bhawaani Maata, who blessed Shivaji against all odds, has always blessed Maharashtra. Marathi saints starting with Dnyaaneshwar have explained ancient Indian wisdom to common folks. Is there a higher blessing than true understanding of Vedaas?

## 6 Conclusion

Let us have a worldwide competition among talented Marathi poets to write a more confident Maharashtra Geet.

The evidence shows that in 2009 Maharashtra has greatness, beauty, riches and blessings–no less than any other State in India. There is, of course, room to grow and further excel. We can do better in many areas. We need to reduce corruption and promote science. It is not so great that no Marathi has ever won the Nobel prize. However these shortcomings will not be overcome by inventing excuses and without being self-confident. Maharashtra Geet should not make a virtue out of our outdated notion of inferiority.